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BROWNBACK CHAIRS HEARING ON CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, today held a hearing on the crisis in Pakistan.

"It was a great disappointment to see the news this week of the military takeover in Pakistan," Brownback said. "Nawaz Sharif was the democratically elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, and he has been a good friend to the United States.

"The problems we are experiencing today precede Pakistan's nuclear detonation. They precede Nawaz Sharif's current government, and his previous one as well. They are, I believe, in large part the result of an inconsistent and flawed policy towards what was once one of our best friends in South Asia.

"I am persuaded that both the administration and the Congress share the blame: Congress for sanctioning Pakistan and curtailing our ability to influence Islamabad; the administration for pursuing a one-issue policy since the nuclear tests a year and a half ago.

"The U.S. rightly strived to have influence in an important part of the world. One of the ways we can do that is by not falling into the trap of zero sum politics on the South Asian subcontinent. What is good for India is not bad for Pakistan and what is bad for Pakistan is not good for India. Each nation in its own right deserves a separate foreign policy. However, when the U.S. treats the same problem in India and Pakistan differently, we create problems for ourselves.

"Neither nation should be in the nuclear business; neither nation should have detonated a nuclear device. And when they did, each deserved the sanctions imposed on them by the president. Looking back however, we made a mistake in threatening and then sanctioning only Pakistan for its development of a nuclear weapon. While I understand some of the motivations behind the Pressler amendment, I am persuaded that ultimately it had the effect of driving Pakistan to a greater reliance on a nuclear deterrent. It also had the effect of lessening our influence over the Pakistani military, which whether we like it or not, is where the real power resides in Pakistan.

"The Pakistan Army, once a bastion of U.S.-trained officers with secular pro-western views, now relies on soldiers trained in Islamist institutions. It should hardly come as a surprise to us that the result is adventures such as the ill-considered incursion over the line of control in Kashmir earlier this year. Had we remained consistent in our engagement with the Pakistani military, we could possibly be in a better position today.

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"The Pressler Amendment is not the only culprit in the who-lost-Pakistan debate. Recent

administration policy has also led us to where we are today. We must face facts: What looks like good South Asia policy in Washington is not necessarily good politics within Pakistan. With both carrot and stick this Administration has tried to force both India and Pakistan into signing the CTBT. This kind of single-mindedness on our part is dangerously short-sighted. This summer this administration used all of its powers of suasion to force a Pakistani withdrawal back to the line of control in Kashmir. While I agree that Pakistan's actions in Kashmir have been dangerous and ill-considered, I also believe a negotiated withdrawal would have benefitted both India and Pakistan without making Nawaz Sharif look like a U.S. puppet to his own people.

"Another fact: The United States has pressured Pakistan not to do any further missile tests. This is an excellent policy. But was it imperative to beat the Sharif government into submission on this matter in light of India's continued testing? How have we furthered our goals in South Asia by policy positions which weakened a democratically elected government in Pakistan?

"And now that we are faced with this extra-constitutional event -- a coup d'etat -- what are we going to do? Cut off aid? We did that already. Give them the cold shoulder? We did that too.

"We are left without too many options. Though we are providing the president with a waiver on the Glenn amendments, sanctions should not be waived under the current circumstances. Indeed, section 508 of the 1999 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act mandates a cutoff of aid in view of the military coup. Yet, if we let Pakistan go now, without any sanctions relief, the United States will be left with no leverage at all and will have no policy tool capable of providing any incentive for a military regime to bring back a democratically-elected civilian government.

"Democracy must be restored to Pakistan. If the duly elected government has lost all credibility, then a caretaker government should be appointed. Long-term military control is unacceptable.

"I support the administration's desire to promote stability in South Asia. However, by making demands which I believe destabilized a fragile democracy in Pakistan, we may have set back those goals by years," Brownback said.

Department of State, Assistant Secretary for South Asia, Karl F. Inderfurth testified at the hearing.